1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

misdemeanour during the festival. Again, the latter may be regarded as more secular than the former: at the festivals of the village-deities the members of the village take a vow in the name of god to keep the rules and restrictions, whereas at the harvest festival no such vow is taken.

At the end of the harvest festival there is a village dance (*ūr kōlu*) in which all the adult males in the village have to take part; and on the following day, or two days later, there is a dance for the entire *nāḍ* to which every village belonging to the particular *nāḍ* sends its representatives. Each village makes a special point of sending its best dancers to the *nāḍ* dance.

The village dance is followed by a collective hunt by the villagers. (A collective hunt may also be organized by a *nāḍ*.) Every adult male in the village is required to be present at the hunt, and a successful hunt implies a co-ordination of the activities of numerous individuals. Lack of proper co-ordination has to be paid for with life or limb.

The festivals of village-deities, the harvest festival, and the festival of arms all terminate with a dinner for the entire village (or *nāḍ*). The boar that is killed in the collective hunt is cooked on this occasion. If the game is not enough to go round, then one or two domesticated pigs or goats are slaughtered in addition. Each house brings its own cooked rice-flour to the dinner. The headman selects five men to serve food to the men.

The men bring halves of coconut shells or leaf-cups for liquor: a young man is given only one cup of liquor while an elder is entitled to more. The singers get an extra share of meat and liquor. The Poleyas do not sit with the rest, but are given a quantity of meat and liquor which they consume by themselves.

Both the village dance and the village hunt stress the unity of the village. In the case of the village hunt, there is the additional element of the threat of danger from the boar or tiger or other wild animal. The village dinner is rightly called *ūrormé* or 'village harmony', as it maintains and increases the harmony of the village.

IX

Like the village and *okka*, the *nāḍ* is a real social unit and not a mere administrative division imposed from above by the Rājas. In fact, before the political integration of Coorg by the Rājas, the maximum political unit seems to have been a union of two or three

COORG TRIBES AND CASTES

Festivals: (1) Huttari

The Huttari is the feast of first fruits. The name is said to be derived from the Malayalam 'pudiyeri', or new rice. It occurs at full moon at the end of November or beginning of December. After various preliminary ceremonies, the person chosen to cut the first sheaves goes at sunset to the fields in procession with a lighted torch in a dish of rice carried before him. He has a sickle in one hand and a bamboo bottle of fresh milk in the other. He cuts the sheaf and distributes the stalk to those present, and puts some into the milk. This is carried in procession to the house, the people shouting, "Poli, poli, Deva", that is, "Increase, increase, O God," followed by a blast of the shrill Coorg brass horn. It is truly a national and thanksgiving feast entirely uninfluenced by Brahmanism. It lasts for seven days. It begins with village rejoicings and extends to Nad or district gatherings, and ends every day with the peculiar cane dance of the men and boys to the tune of the most melancholy and monotonous sound of horns, drums and songs. Other games vary the proceedings, but the most interesting part is always the champion fight in playful dance, which often ends in a general skirmish in which the canes are freely used.

(2) Kaylmurtha

The Kaylmurtha is the festival of arms celebrated by the youths and men of Coorg sometime in August. When the hard labours of ploughing, sowing, and transplanting of rice are over, a break in the monsoon spreads its bright light and sunny warmth over the hills and dales, forests and fields in Coorg, when a holiday is most welcome. The Takka of the grama calls some respectable men to accompany him to the astrologer's home. They ascertain the most propitious day for the celebration of the festival.

On the morning of the joyous day, the whole armoury of the house is placed in the verandah, gun and spear, bow and arrow, sword and knife. Some of the young men sit down to burnish the familiar weapons. When this is done, they are carried to a room or central hall, where they are placed in a corner. When the auspicious moment arrives incense is burnt before the weapons, sandal paste is dotted on them in profusion, and a show offering, *Nivedya*, is offered to them and the idols. As soon as the festival is over, the whole house sits down to dinner. The men then proceed with their arms to the village green, *uru-mandu*, to spend the afternoon in shooting at a mark and in athletic sports. The following day is devoted to a hunt in the forest belonging to the village. This is followed by a great hunt of the whole Nadu. It is a repetition of the village hunt on a larger scale. Whatever game is obtained, the man who killed the animal receives a hind quarter and the head. The rest goes to the company. The Kaylmurtha is the most glorious of all festivities to the young Coorgs,

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and the popular song of the Coorg mountaineer does full justice to this sentiment: 527 533

(3) Bhagavathi Feast

The Bhagavathi feast has been introduced by the Tulu Brahmins. It takes place two months preceding the monsoon. It is connected with demoniacal possessions, and extends over nine days. Tantri Brahmins, Coorgs and Holeyas have their share in the feast, and votaries disport themselves in their orgies in as noisy a manner as the Ajjala Palyas. The chief object of the feast is the collection of votive offerings to Tantri Brahmins who are an object of dread to the Coorgs. 796 [177] [787] [782]

(4) Devasthans

The Coorg Devasthanas are rude village shrines of mud walls and thatched roof within a gloomy grove. The only ones deserving notice are those at Bhagamandala, Palur, Irupu and Omkareswara Devasthans at Mercara, the latter of which is built in the same Moorish style as the Rajas' tombs. 346

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4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AWS Coorg AWS

42 distinguished for bravery. Apparently anticipating the pre-
302 sent military regulation, they shave their chin but sport
554 mighty whiskers! The colour of the Coorgs is lighter than
might be expected under this latitude. Their mode of life
186 and pride of race impart to their whole bearing an air of
manly independence and dignified self-assertion, well sustained
by their peculiar and picturesque costume.

291 The principal Coorg dress is a long coat (kupasa) of white
411 or blue cotton or dark coloured cloth and even velvet. It
reaches below the knees, is open in front, has, if not white,
short sleeves under which longer ones of a different colour
extend to the waist, and is held together by a red or blue sash
of cotton or silk which is several times wound round the waist
and which holds the never failing Coorg knife, with ivory or
silver handle and chains of the same metal. A red kerchief
or the peculiarly fashioned turban, which is large and flat at
the top and covers a portion of the back of the neck, forms
the head-dress. The feet are bare or protected with light
301 sandals. A necklace of the berry of Rudrákshi (Elæocarpus
ganitrus), silver or gold bracelets on the wrists, and silver
and gold earrings with pearls or precious stones complete
their festive costume. Those who are in possession of the
Coorg-medal or the lunulate ornament called Kokaládi[2] do
not fail to suspend it round their neck, as may be seen on the
front-illustration. Their every day dress is of course of a
more simple nature. The Coorg warrior looks more imposing.
714 His dress is of the same cut, but of coarser material and
411 shorter. In addition to his handy waist-knife (Picha-katti),
he wears on his back in a strong clasp of brass the curved,
broad-bladed Coorg knife (Odu-katti) which is seen in the
147 hand of the figure in our illustration. In a hand-to-hand
527 fight it was a most formidable weapon and since the young
Coorgs have no longer Mussulman or Nair antagonists to
decapitate, they display at their feasts the strength of their

[1] [Errata: This should read "wrist". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116; P. 493 -- Analyst]
[2] [Errata: This should read "Kokadádi." -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

arms and the sharp edge of their knives by beheading pigs or cutting at a blow through the trunk of thick plantain trees. The long matchlock gun is now more a weapon of curiosity than of practical use, except with the poorer Coorgs, the wealthier sportsmen having supplied themselves with English rifles of the best description. Their ancient arms and ornaments were manufactured with the most simple tools by natives of Coorg. 714 411 [147] [527] [439] [326]

The Coorg Rajahs used to reward men distinguished for personal bravery with silver and gold bangles, or with an ornamented large knife bearing the Rajah's stamp ☙ upon the blade and these tokens are kept as sacred heirlooms and worn on grand occasions only. 703

The personal appearance of the Coorg women is not less striking than that of the men. They are remarkably fair, of goodly stature, well shaped and many are really handsome before the betel-chewing, which generally begins after marriage, disfigures their regular features and blackens their otherwise brilliant teeth. Their festive costume—and the ordinary dress differs only in quality—is one of the most becoming that can be seen in India. A white or light blue cotton jacket with long sleeves fits tight and is closed up to the neck. A long piece of white muslin or blue cotton stuff forms the skirt, being several times wrapped round the waist and tied by means of a string, so as to make the skirt fall in graceful folds almost down to the ancles whilst one end of it covers the bosom and is knotted together on the right shoulder. To give fulness to the skirt the other end is arranged in folds, which, contrary to the fashion of other Hindu women are gathered behind, a sensible arrangement and most convenient for unobstructed activity in house and field. This peculiarity did not escape the notice of the prying Brahmins who of course accounted for it by a silly Puránic legend, which at 142 [276] 292 [291]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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Thou hast built the solid gate,
And the courts around the house.
Oh! my father; yesterday
Fallen on the bed of sickness,
And to-day before the feet
Of the Lord of earth and heaven,
And tomorrow, like the sun
Setting in the cloudy sky,
Thou shalt sink into the grave.
Woe! my father, thou art gone!
Woe! my father, gone for ever!

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4. POPULAR FESTIVALS OF THE COORGS.

The festivals of the Coorgs are not numerous. A weekly day of rest is recognised as little by the Coorgs as by other Hindus.

The two great annual festivals take place in quick succession towards the end of the year. The *Kávéri-feast* in Tulámása i. e. the time of the sun's entering into the sign of Libra in October, and the *Huttari* or Harvest-feast in November or December.

Before the monsoon in April and may the *Bhagavati-festival* is observed all over Coorg and in August, generally at the first break of the monsoon, the *Keilmurta* or festival of arms, is celebrated by the youths and men of Coorg.

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a. The Kávéri-feast.

About the middle of October all Coorg prepares for the grand festival of Kávéri. The sun has gained the ascendency over the monsoon clouds. A few passing showers only may still be expected. The rice valleys are clothed with rich paddy approaching maturity; the forests and grass hills resplendent with the freshness and beauty of spring. Every Coorg house sends one or two representatives to Tala-Kávéri. Also pil-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

"If I killed this pattern of righteousness, my sins could never be forgiven," he says to himself. He declares to the cow, that she may return in safety to her calf and her herd, takes a desperate leap high into the air, and falls down dead before the good cow. This is the Coorg lay of the cow, consisting of one hundred and odd verses. 796 539

b. The Huttari-feast.

The Huttari-feast is held in honor of the annual rice-harvest. The name is derived from the Malayálam Pudi-ari, new rice, and by the rules of Coorg grammar transformed into Huttari. The festival occurs in the month of Scorpio which succeeds Libra. The day of the Coorg-festival depends upon the day fixed by the Malayálam Astrologers for the celebration of the New-rice-festival in the month of Leo. The Malayálam festival takes place two months before that of Coorg, because the rice on the coast ripens two months earlier. If the Malayálam festival of the First-fruits fall upon the first day of the Simha-mása, that of Coorg is held on the first day of Vrishchika-mása; if the Malayálam festival be on the second day of that month, the Coorg holidays commence on the second day of this month, and so on. (Simha-mása corresponds to our September—October, Vrishchika-mása to our November—December.) 796 [805] [787]

The Huttari is the great national festival of the Coorgs and of the Holeyas. It is a heathenish Christmas season, a sort of Saturnalia. The real holidays are only seven in number, but both Coorgs and Holeyas, who stand in an ancient and intimate relation to each other, generally add two or three more days of feasting and merry-making to the great week. On this occasion, as well as on the great Kávéri-day, Brahmins are in no way wanted. Nor could they well officiate in a Coorg kitchen on the Kávéri-day, or preside over the pork-and-brandy-feasts in the merry days of Huttari. [648] [527]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

796 piece given to him into a copper vessel, held by the Tantri.
[782] With the setting sun the business of the day is concluded.

The morning of the eighth day is devoted to the delivery of votive presents, as on the preceding day. At ten o'clock
[535] dances are performed by the young men, as on the seventh day. This continues till two o'clock, when all the good shots
796 assemble for shooting at a mark. A cocoanut is hung up in
526 some tree between two plantain-bunch-tops as a mark. He who hits the nut, is rewarded with a present of three annas and the honor of the name of a good marksman. Then one of the Takkas, or the Coorg-dancer before Bhagavati, distributes a number of cocoanuts (of which there is an abundance, as every family must bring one or two) to the young men. One seizes a nut between his hands, others try to take it out of his grasp. In a few moments the whole ground is filled
796 with parties struggling for cocoanuts. He who succeeds in forcing the nut out of the hands of the original possessor,
[788] carries it away as his prize. At three o'clock the idol-procession takes place again, after which all the men go with the idol to the river or the tank, to bathe the goddess and themselves.

Ninth day. From each house one person appears at the temple, bearing the yearly money-contribution, which is deli-
[794] vered to the Takkas. The collection being made, the salaries of the temple-officers and servants of the temple are paid.
[574] Then the Brahmans give a good, undefiled dinner of pure vegetable dishes, to their Coorg supporters, first, of course, eating themselves, and leaving the rest to their friends. This temple dinner is the last act in the Bhagavati festival.

527 **d. The Keilmûrta festival.**

The Keilmûrta festival is a very different affair, altogether
[787] a Coorg business. Early in the month of Leo (July—August) the Takka of the gráma calls some respectable men to

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AWS Coorg AWS

accompany him to the house of the astrologer. They enquire of the wise man, what will be the most propitious day for the celebration of the Keilmúrta. By the sage's answer the day of joy for the village-youth is fixed. The hard labours of ploughing, sowing and rice-transplanting are over, there is a lull in the monsoon, and now and then a most lovely day spreads its bright light and sunny warmth over the hills and valleys, forests and fields of Coorg. The people have long been at labour in their fields and houses: a holiday is now most welcome. On the morning of the joyous day, the whole armoury of the house is collected in the verandah, gun and spear, bow and arrow, sword and knife. Some of the young men sit down to burnish the familiar weapons. When this is done, they are carried to some room or to the centre-place, the Nadumane, and there placed in a corner. They wait now for the muhúrta, the propitious time, assigned by the astrologer. At the right moment incense is burned before the weapons, sandalwood-paste is dotted upon them in profusion, and a show-offering of rice and other food (nevédya) is made to them, as to idols. As soon as this ceremony is over, a mat is placed before the weapons, and the whole house sits down to dinner. After the meal, the men take their arms and proceed to the Urumandu (village-green) to spend the afternoon in shooting at a mark, and in athletic exercises. When the cocoanut has been hit, some of the company jump over a rope extended four or five feet from the ground. After this exercise, plantain-trees are fixed upon the ground, standing three deep. Now the strength of arms and the goodness of knives are tried. He who succeeds in cutting through three plantain-trees at one stroke, carries away the palm. Then round, heavy stones, placed on the Mandu for the purpose, are lifted and thrown, or put as in Scotland, over the head by such as are strong enough. The evening has now set in, and the company disperses. On the following morn-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

On the following morning the youths assemble for a hunt in the forest, belonging to the village. Whatever game is brought down, is divided by the huntsmen in the following manner: the man who has killed the animal, receives a hind-quarter and the head, the rest belongs to the company. This day is followed by a great hunt of the whole Nádu, a repetition of the village-hunt, on a larger scale. The Keilmúrta, to the taste of young Coorg, is the most glorious of all the festivals.

5. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND POPULAR SUPERSTITION.

The previous description of familiar and popular Coorg life would be incomplete without an account of other *religious observances*, if such a name may be given to the lowest degree of superstitions, which take the place of the worship of God among this rude race.

a. The sanctuaries of a Coorg community.

Instead of a general description, a short sketch of the village "Arméri" in Beppunád, the centre of Coorg life, may serve as a specimen.

Arméri numbers only 25 Coorg houses, but is richly provided with idol shrines. First a Bhagavati temple in charge of Brahmans. In connection with this kind of worship there is a Mahádéva temple, and two Lingas in the jungle, which receive regular púja. Also two sanctuaries of Ayappa (the Shani, Saturn Pán? of Hindu mythology) have Brahmans for priests. Ayappa (Lord) is quite naturalized among the Coorgs. He is the great forest-god, a mighty hunter, to whom models in clay of dogs, horses and tigers are offered in abundance. In these observances the whole community joins under the superintendence of Brahmans. There are besides six places in which Chámundi or Raktéshvari (names for Párvati, Shiva's

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

the village or nád offers Prasáda and whilst throwing a flower-garland over the bridegroom's neck, he mutters a blessing, for which pious act he afterwards receives a gift in money. In case of illness Brahmins are sent for, to implore the deity for recovery. In a place set apart in the compound they perform their ceremonies and, if the patient gets well, they are amply rewarded. At a housewarming (griha-pravésha) it has become the fashion among the Coorgs to invite Brahmins and to give them a good meal and presents. The expenses incurred amount from a small sum to upwards of a thousand Rupees. The Puróhita or officiating Brahmin kindles a fire of jackwood (hebalasu) in the middle room, throws ghee and rice into the flame and repeats some mantras as required for the occasion. Thus we see, that Brahminism invades every accessible opening in Coorg life, and pandering to the ignorance and pride of the Coorgs, it is more successful than the great truths of Christianity. It is, however, to be hoped, that education along with other civilizing influences will do its work, to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and superstition and help to free the Coorgs from the trammels of priestly imposition.

To acknowledge the indigenous Coorg priesthood and yet account for its degraded state as compared with the erudition of the twice-born, the Brahmins invented the following legend, which is not in harmony with the Kávéri-Purána:—The sage Kávéra as a reward for his austerities was blessed with a daughter Kávéri, whom he promised in marriage to Agastia another sage, who also resided on the Brahmagiris. Kávéri did not accept the proposal and assuming the shape of a river fled from the mountain. Agastia in hot persuit overtook her in Katiednád and persuaded her to submit their dispute to the arbitration of their friends. They called three families of Amma-Kodagas and six of Coorgs; the former took the part of Agastia, the latter that of Kávéri. The Amma-Codagas